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be sung to the tune of the vintage song in Isa. LXV., 8 could not be sung to any tune beginning "*Al-tashheth*."

The reader will now see why I tax the so-called higher criticism with poverty of invention. Coming in contact with the obscure phrase *Al-tashheth*, it was allowable, of course, to understand by it the name of a tune, to which the Psalms in question were to be sung. But a very moderate degree of inventive genius would have suggested that there may have been a *vintage* song, "Destroy it not" (i. e. the cluster), and a *sacred* song "Destroy not thy people," or "him that trusteth in thee."

Will this conjecture abide the test of experiment? It looks promising at first. Psalms LVII. and LXXV. each commence with a word somewhat like אֱלֹהֵי תִשְׁחֶת; הוֹדִינוּ and חֲנִנִי.

If we were to omit the לָךְ in LXXV., 1, which may be supposed to have crept into the text, we should have in the Athnah clause a striking metrical parallelism:

חֲנִנִי אֱלֹהִים חֲנִנִי כִּי בָךְ חֲסִיָּה
הוֹדִינוּ אֱלֹהִים הוֹדִינוּ וְקָרֹב שְׂמֶךְ

But it will be seen that the resemblance is not quite perfect; nor does the first word in each correspond in accent with "*Al-tashheth*." The supposition breaks down, also, when we attempt to apply it to the other two *Al-tashheth* Psalms, LVIII. and LIX.

On the whole it seems best to abandon the view that *Al-tashheth* was the name of a tune. It is noticeable that while Gesenius does not speak positively on the subject, saying "אֱלֹהֵי תִשְׁחֶת seems to be the first words of an earlier song, to the measure of which these Psalms were to be sung,"—Davies' lexicon simply says "it would seem to be *part* of some well-known song." Is it not better, then, to fall back on the supposition that some allusion is intended to the *contents* of these Psalms? "In all of them there is a distinct declaration of the destruction of the wicked and the preservation of the righteous."

NOTES ON THE TARGUM AS A COMMENTARY.*

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Prov. XXXI., 27. The common translation reads: "She looketh well to the ways of her house, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

While the grammatical construction of the sentence quoted offers no difficulty, it is obvious that, from a literary point of view we meet here with a bathos, entirely in discord with the general tenor of the beautiful poem. After having described the noble woman's virtues and untiring industry and forethought in all directions, to conclude with the praise that she eats no bread of idleness, is, to say the least a *gradatio ad minus*, and besides out of all logical connection with the preceding clause, "She superintends the ways of her house." The Targum, how-

* These lines intend, by means of a few examples, to show that the Targum contains a good many interpretative elements which have not yet received the full attention which they may deserve.

ever, makes *idleness* the subject, and *bread* the object of the second clause, and consequently translates: "Clear are (to her) the ways of her house, and bread—idleness does not eat." The sense is clear: she has a strict eye on everything that is going on in her household, and sees to it that idleness shall eat no bread in her house. Luzzato in his *Philoxenus*, p. 108, while restoring the proper version, reads "bread of idleness," without stating whence he has taken that version. Neither the editions before me, nor the variations quoted in Levy's *Targumic Dictionary* contain the *of* which, it seems, Luzzato inserted in reliance on his wonderful memory, the Targum being to him as familiar as the original. Be this as it may, the fact that all, or at least, most of the Targum editions and manuscripts read חֲבִינָנוֹת without the prefix ד, must be welcomed as an improvement on the current conception.

Isaiah III., 12. Com. vers: "(As for) my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them." For "the women" as the rulers may well be an allusion to the officers' wives into whose households they are forced to bring luxuries at the people's expense. See v. 14. It may fairly be left to the readers to follow up the various translations of the verse under consideration, and suffice it to state here that Targum and LXX. agree in taking the word מַעֲלָל as *gleaner*, and reading נָשִׁים for נְשִׁים (the latter version having been noticed already by the commentary ascribed to R. Sh'lomo Yitz'haki or Rashi). The verse reads accordingly: "My people—its officers are a troop of gleaners, and creditors rule over it." The singular מַעֲלָל as a collective noun is in conformity with the military terms מִשְׁחִית, מִפְּלִיט, etc., denoting a troop of, etc. The figure of speech using the gleanings of vineyards for oppression and expoliation, is frequent; comp. Jer. VI., 9. The change of נְשִׁים to נָשִׁים is less recommendable, as long as we can well get along with the Massoretic text; but מַעֲלָל as gleaners is more than a mere verbal change; it gives the whole context a coherence otherwise missing. What has "the eating up of the vineyard" (v. 4) to do here, if no vineyard has been mentioned before? What means "the robbery of the poor," when no poor have been spoken of before? But now we see the entire current of thought. The officers collecting the taxes go around like "the gleaner," that is, *the poor man* entitled to the gleanings of the field (Lev. XIX., 10); they take the last remnants of wealth from the oppressed citizen, and it is to them that the prophet says, "And ye have eaten up the vineyard, robbery of (what belongs to) the poor is harbored in your homes."

And we see here again how much a deeper penetration into the sense of Scriptural texts, will help to establish the age of institutions legislated upon in the Pentateuch. In our case, the prophet has before him the poor law about the gleanings, as a well-established though perhaps not generally observed institution from which metaphors can be borrowed with the consciousness that they are well understood.